The biggest barrier I ever faced in sports? It came crashing down—literally—my freshman year of high school when I broke my collarbone.

Going into high school, I wasn't just excited. I was buzzing. The year before, I'd finished middle school football on a high note and was already being called up to join the varsity squad. Recruiters had me on their radar early. I had one clear goal: make a name for myself. I wanted to be a dominant running back—one that people across the country knew by name. So, I trained like my future depended on it. And honestly, it did.

That summer, I gave everything I had. Waking up early, pushing myself harder with every sprint, every rep, every drill—I made sure there wouldn't be a single doubt in my mind or my coaches' that I belonged on that field.

By game one, all the grind was paying off. I got the start as a freshman. Four carries. Over 80 yards. A statement performance.

Game two? Even better. Five carries for 75+ yards and a touchdown. At that point, I wasn't just playing—I was contributing to wins. I was the only freshman on varsity, and I was helping lead us to a 2–0 record.

Then came game three. It was huge. First home game. First regional conference matchup. First time my family would watch me play high school football in person. The energy that day? Electric. My coach picked me up that morning, windows down, blasting rock music. We were fired up. I was all in.

Until the music cut.

Coach turned the volume down and hit me with a curveball, and told me I wouldn't be starting. He didn't want senior players upset that a freshman was getting more snaps. But he promised I'd be in within a few plays. That stung a bit, but I shrugged it off. I knew I'd get my chance.

Sure enough, eleven minutes still left in the first quarter, I get the call. First down on the 20-yard line. I took the handoff and exploded through the defense, making it all the way to the five. But just as I was about to score, a defender jumped on my back. I crashed down hard—right onto my shoulder.

It felt like my shoulder was being shoved up into my armpit. I tried to shake it off, but the pain hit instantly. I sprinted off the field and straight into the medical tent.

A hospital trip and some X-rays later, the doctor broke the news: my collarbone was fractured and shifted. I needed surgery. My season? Over. Just like that.

I sat in that hospital bed, in full denial. Tears ran down my face. I kept thinking, *Why me? Why now?* I'd done everything right. I'd prepared. I'd performed. And now it felt like all that momentum—gone.

But I didn't stay in that place long. I told myself, *"No way this is the end. I won't let it be."*

One month later, I started physical therapy. And let me tell you, it was brutal. Not just physically—but mentally. Watching from the sidelines while my team played… it hurt. It felt like time was passing me by. Like I was falling behind.

But instead of sitting in that feeling, I used it. Every rep, every band pull, every shoulder raise—I attacked therapy with the same energy I had brought to the field. I worked my tail off. And somehow—miraculously—my shoulder fully recovered in just three months.

Rehab tested everything in me. But finishing it flipped a switch in my brain. I told myself: "*Nothing will ever stop me again."* Not an injury. Not setbacks. Not doubts. This was the first real punch life threw at me—and I punched back.

So, did I overcome the challenge? Absolutely. I refused to let it define me. And to this day, it shaped how I approach everything—on and off the field. This wasn't just a comeback story. It was the moment I learned how to keep going, no matter what tries to break me.